

TELEVISION - DRUG OF THE NATION

by Susan Bryce

It has penetrated the lives and mentality of nearly every nation on the planet ..., - but how much do we know about that box sitting in the focal centre of most lounge and bed rooms across our nations?

In the late seventies and early eighties, there was grave concern over mind control and brain washing techniques employed by various government agencies throughout the world. *The Search for the Manchurian Candidate*, by John Marks and Walter Bowart's *Operation Mind Control*, told of drug experiments, hypnosis and various other "techniques" devised in the quest to programme the human mind.

Dr. Wilson Bryan Key warned the world about subliminal advertising and manipulation used in the media to brain-wash and condition society. Key found that millions of dollars were being spent by advertisers to subliminally manipulate and indoctrinate innocent audiences, all to promote frenzied mass consumerism.

This article looks at some simple subliminal programming devices, and the use of television advertising and programmes as a means of controlling the masses.

THE USE OF SUBLIMINALS

The most well known research in this field was undertaken by Dr. Wilson Bryan Key, a Professor of Journalism, and author of three books; *Media Sexploitation*, *The Clam Plate Orgy*, and *Subliminal Seduction*.

Key discovered devices to mechanically induce subliminal perception. One was the Tachistoscope - a film projector with a high-speed shutter which flashes messages every five seconds at 1/3000th of a second. The speeds can be varied for different effects. The Tachistoscope was patented through the United States Patent Office in 1962.

The Tachistoscope was superseded by a light intensity instrument. This subliminal perception device uses light intensity projected beneath the level of conscious awareness bringing about an audience reaction far superior to that achieved by the Tachistoscope.

A simple projector is connected to a rheostat and the light intensity is turned down to below the level that the conscious eye perceives. The message, nevertheless, is still perceived by the unconscious mind.

The 1950s and 1960s saw a revolution in experiments with subliminal stimuli. In 1962 and 1966, Dr. Hal C. Becker patented subliminal induction devices capable of introducing information into the brain without the recipient's conscious awareness.

Becker later operated a successful weight reduction clinic

near New Orleans using a twelve week clinical programme which used subliminal audio and visual stimuli. He sustained weight loss for hundreds of obese patients. His programme was recognised by the New Orleans Medical Society.

Becker also developed an anti-theft programme tested in a large number of Canadian and US retail stores. He designed an audio input which inserts a subliminally perceived voice repeating admonitions against stealing into store music systems.

The subliminal voice, 30-40 decibels under the music is recorded on an endless loop tape cassette and is undetectable even with sophisticated instruments. The low level of the subliminal voice varies instantaneously against changes in supraliminal (consciously perceived) music volume.

The message repeated *I am honest, I won't steal. Stealing is dishonest*, and similar phrases. This simple induction technique could easily be used to sell high profit merchandise, or - for that matter, political or ideological indoctrination.

In 1986, *The Times* hailed "a revolutionary and controversial security system poised to make its appearance in the high street this year ... known as reinforcement messaging, the new system broadcasts messages like *be honest - do not steal*, over a store's loudspeakers at exactly the threshold of hearing so that it is just audible if you stand next to the speaker. A computer monitors background noise or in-store music and maintains output at a pre-set level. Shoppers and

staff are said to receive the message without realising it, and to react accordingly."

Other subliminal techniques include the one dreamed up by the US magazine, *New Woman*, known as subliminal synergism, which the magazine claimed made more readers look at ads. The method involves placing dominant colours from four-colour advertisements behind headline blocks on facing editorial pages - the effect - to cause the reader to move her eyes automatically from the editorial to the advertisement.

ADVERTISING: - THE WANT MAKERS

Eric Clark has commented that the more we are bombarded with advertising, the less we notice it, and yet, almost certainly we are affected. Today, advertising is vast, increasingly global and more scientific in its methods.

Any analysis of advertising content on T.V. reveals evenings of total absurdity as men and women discuss their constipation, bad breath, body odours, backaches, indigestion and an incredible assortment of psychosomatic ailments before millions of viewers.

Women on television commercials appear as neurotic morons whose main life interest involves their never quite white enough laundry, their relentless search for a kitchen free of stains, germs, odours and smells. And the greatest banality of them all seems to be the struggle to obtain really soft toilet tissue.

Television advertisements are obsessed with the never ending quest for cleanliness and the elimination of "dirt" in all its forms - dust, grime, grease, mould, baked on dirt, caked on dirt, dirt from children, dirt from men, dirt from pets. Dirt on the body, in your mouth, on your hair, on your clothes, on the floor, on the carpet, on the walls. Dirt is everywhere.

There are a stunning array of products to eliminate "dirt": mould killers, cockroach bombs, baits and sprays, disinfectants, toilet "ducks", blue loos, toothpastes, plaque destroyer, and the latest in oral hygiene - dental health chewing gum.

Whiteness is another powerful conditioning factor. We are encouraged by advertising to whiten clothes, leave our sinks and toilets shining white. Whiteness has become synonymous with purity, cleanliness and social success. We eat white sugar, white flour and drink white milk.

When it comes to the crunch, most people don't realise that the products purchased, and the ones decided against, are made by the one company anyway.

The grocery giant Unilever is a good example. Unilever and a few other giant corporations dominate the Australian food market, often hiding virtual monopolies behind shelves full of "competing" labels.

As the number of products and brands on the shelves increases daily, the number of companies behind the brands falls due to mergers and takeovers.

The result is the formation of an oligopoly. Consumers, wooed by advertisements exhorting them to do the best for their families are generally choosing from the products of a few companies.

The three most common forms of modern behaviour therapy are

i) Operant Conditioning : Reinforcement of behaviour by reward, often accompanied by simultaneous sound and light stimulation

ii) Aversion Therapy : Inhibition of behaviour by a painful or unpleasant reinforcement using any technique which produces fear and avoidance

iii) Desensitization : The subject is first trained to relax beyond his normal state, then presented with images that invoke mild anxiety. The images are repeated until the subject shows no anxiety, then a stronger image is introduced and the process is repeated. Finally the subject becomes desensitized to even the strongest image.

Some of these companies are foreign owned. "Australian" products such as Vegemite, Rosella Tomato Sauce, Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Smith's Crisps, Minties, and Tip Top Bread, are based off-shore!

Some advertisements are universal. For example, the Bear used in Huggie Fabric Softener commercials in Australia, is the same Bear used to sell Fa Fa Fabric Softener in Japan. Despite vigorous advertising for apparently competing brands or items like margarine, soap powder and soft-drinks, most are produced by just two or three companies.

Oligopolies have capitalised on the fact that they can sell more if they package the item differently and aim at different markets. For instance, Unilever makes Drive, Omo and Surf washing powders. Omo's platform is 'whiteness', versus Drive's which is a stain remover, versus Surf, which gives you a good all over wash.

The hair care industry is another example of the compartmentalisation of the market; with products to condition, enrich, nurture and shine your hair; with shampoos and conditioners for babies, children, teenagers, men, women, executives, families, the aged, the balding, people with coloured or permed, curly or straight hair; dry, oily, normal or dandruffed hair.

Most hair care products contain one fossil-fuel based detergent. Some contain herbs which do nothing but produce a smell of herbs. Others contain ground fish scales which cause the detergent to look pearly, and others are "medicated" for use on scalps which are undiseased. And some, in a world of acute food shortage, even contain protein for no other reason than it sticks to the outer surface of each hair and makes it feel thicker.

In the end it is just detergent that is packaged and marketed.

PROGRAMMED WHILE YOU "SLEEP"

There is so much to take in during one night's viewing that, perceptual overload occurs. An evening of TV viewing is interrupted by commercial breaks every five or so minutes. These breaks last for 30, 60, 90, or 120 seconds. There is so much information coming at viewers over a short time, that they sit lethargically staring blankly at the screen. This is precisely what you are supposed to do.

In this lethargic mode, when people are almost snoozing, more is taken in subconsciously by the mind. Have you ever wondered why people fall asleep in front of the TV?

Viewers become passive recipients, on the treadmill of mindless consumerism, routed endlessly from one shopping centre to another, buying, buying, buying. Mass programmed shoppers. Becoming absorbed in the pursuit of media popularised roles or fashions, in the vain hope of becoming loved, respected, rich, socially popular or sexually desirable. Sheep who venerate compulsive neurotic behaviour as normal, desirable human contact.

The state is a major and growing user of television. The government urges citizens not to drink and drive, to use seat belts, to buy government bonds, to utilise Telecom's services, not to use illegal drugs, and to help prevent the spread of AIDS.

Advertising is attractive to the government, it allows it to project the image it wants, and allows it to be seen caring.

Dr. Ernest Hilgard, author of the most widely used texts in the field of hypnosis, states that "sitting quietly, with no sensory inputs aside from the screen, no orienting outside the set, is itself capable of getting people to set aside ordinary reality, allowing the substitution of some other reality that the set may offer.

You can get so imaginatively involved that alternatives temporarily fade away."

For government departments and statutory authorities, there is money, of course, but even more, it is high profile, and because normal checks as to effectiveness (via extra sales) don't apply, departments are often allowed their creative heads.

TV - THE SOCIAL CONDITION

Television makes a good substitute for a baby sitter. It is the greatest pacifier. How many children (and for that matter, adults) can repeat verbatim the contents of a television advertisement - simply because it is repeated over and over. Indoctrination begins at an early age with cartoons and "educational" shows.

A masterstroke of marketing has been in the area of children's toys, where toy companies create TV programmes that are based around toys. Examples include Kenner's Care Bears, Mattell's Masters of the Universe, and Hasbro-Bradley's Transformers (toys that can change from vehicles to robots). Television is not only used to sell toys, but it is the TV series that makes the toys desirable and gives them animated qualities.

Television dominates time. But also destroys communication among family members. Our grandparents knew the neighbours, the people down the street and probably half of the local community. Today we are more isolated, sitting inside, watching our "Neighbours" on T.V. With everyone perceiving precisely the same image on a TV screen, there are no unique perspectives for individuals. TV cannot pro-

Pioneering Hypnotist Dr. Milton Erickson was responsible for the development of a trance inducing technique known as "confusion."

It requires that a person is given "so much to deal with that you don't give him a chance to do anything on his own. It's fast, continuous, requiring that he try to deal with one thing after another, switching around from focus to focus. The hypnotist then calls the the patient's attention to any particular thing, it hardly matters what.

Eventually something like overload is reached, the patient shows signs of breaking and then the hypnotist comes in with some clear relief, some simple instruction, and the patient immediately goes into trance."

vide a real multi-sensory experience. As we become more isolated, we become more and more alike. There is an increasing convergence of tastes, habits, activities and lifestyles. We are all programmed by the same machine.

As a dominant member of the family, the TV provides models by which real life family members assess each other. For over a decade, the ideal two-parent family ruled the TV sets - *I Love Lucy*, *The Nelsons*, *Father Knows Best*. This was followed by the one parent family - *The Partridge Family*, *My Three Sons*, *Doris Day*, *Nanny and the Professor*, and so on.

Unfortunately, the fantasy families of then and now are unconsciously accepted as the real thing or as models of what the real thing should be like. There is little doubt that television's so-called entertainment provides millions of viewers with an education in human values and relationships, far more pervasive and significant than the socialisation or educational processes communicated in schooling.

On television, parents, or symbolic parents are always active, involved, interesting people. The real-life parent, passively stretched out before the tube for a nightly sunbathed in stereotyped imagery, must appear to any child as the opposite polarity of all that is good, worthwhile and meaningful in the night's programme schedule.

COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOUR SYNDROME

According to Key, subliminal technology has the power to drive many individuals into pathological behaviours - compulsive eating and drinking, preferences for nutritionally deficient foods, alcoholism, smoking, a variety of sexual maladjustments and dysfunctions and a myriad assortment of psychogenic illnesses.

Data on the relationship between heartbeats and suggestibility reveals that music or voice timed to the rhythm of the human heart beat - 72 pulses per minute, can affect human behaviour.

Experimental commercials prepared using 72 beats per minute as pacing for drumbeats, music and voice have been tested in a special theatre with a random audience of housewives and husbands. The advertisement was for a new analgesic (headache potion).

Results showed that had the analgesic commercial been broadcast to the roughly 30 million people watching the NBC Evening News, five million would have developed headaches within three hours of viewing it.

CONCLUSIONS

"Democratic" societies are probably more brainwashed and controlled by government and economic institutions and by the mass media generated culture than any other population in the world.

When people become mentally apathetic, they are more prone to totalitarian solutions. Much unlike the crude, brutish systems of totalitarian governments, control systems in "democratic" countries are highly sophisticated and remarkably successful.

It would be naive to be shocked at this development. We have lived for centuries in a society rooted in obedience to authority, obeying commands we are encouraged to spend, buy and throw away.

We are first convinced that we are not controlled. Once this assumption is generally accepted and culturally disseminated, the population can be easily manipulated in virtually any desired direction.

Then it simply becomes necessary to persuade people that the few rules or controls that exist are in everybody's best interest, helping them remain free and uncontrolled. These controls proliferate and are accepted as normal, natural necessities for the betterment of life as truth is replaced with credibility.



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